

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are currently pending in the subject application, and are presently under consideration. Claims 1-16 are rejected. Claims 1, 5, 9, 13 and 14-16 have been amended. Favorable reconsideration of the application is requested in view of the amendments and comments herein.

I. Specification

The grammatical errors, indicated by the Examiner, in paragraphs [0009], [0010] and [0021] have been amended.

II. Claim Objections

Claims 14-16 have been objected to because of informalities. Claims 14-16 have been amended to correct these informalities.

III. Rejection of Claims 5, 6, 13, 14 and 16 Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 5, 6, 13, 14 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Vaeth (U.S. 6,308,277). Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested for at least the following reasons.

Claim 5 has been amended to recite maintaining a one-to-one correspondence between users of an enterprise and signature certificates. Vaeth discloses a method for distributing digital certificates to requestors (See Vaeth, Col. 4, Lines 34-57), however Vaeth does not disclose that each requestor cannot have more than one certificate. That is, Vaeth does not disclose maintaining a one-to-one correspondence between users of an enterprise and signature certificates, as recited in claim 5. Accordingly, Vaeth does not disclose each and every element of claim 5, and therefore, claim 5 is not anticipated by Vaeth and should be patentable over the cited prior art.

Claims 6 and 8 depend from claim 5 and should be patentable for substantially the same reasons as claim 5 and for the specific elements recited therein. Accordingly, allowance of claims 6 and 8 is respectfully requested.

Additionally, claim 8 recites providing a personal revocation authority to revoke a user's previous signature certificate, the personal revocation authority being chosen so as to personally recognize the user. Vaeth discloses that a registration authority (RA) may verify certificate request data (CRD) with data in a registration database to approve or disapprove a certificate request. Vaeth does not disclose that an RA can revoke a digital certificate. That is, Vaeth does not disclose providing a personal revocation authority to revoke a user's previous signature certificate, as recited in claim 8. Further, even if the RA can revoke digital certificates, as shown in Fig. 3 of Vaeth, RA 180 is a computer. Conversely, the personal revocation authority recited in claim 8 is a person (See Para. [0021] of the Spec.). Consequently, the RA computer disclosed in Vaeth cannot personally recognize a user like the personal revocation authority recited in claim 8. Vaeth discloses that a certificate authority (CA) 230 generates revocation lists (See Vaeth Col. 10, Lines 60-65). In Vaeth, like the RA, the CA is a computer, and thus, the CA cannot personally recognize a user like the personal revocation authority recited in claim 8. Thus, Vaeth does not disclose each and every element of claim 8. Therefore, Vaeth does not anticipate claim 8.

Claim 13 has been amended to recite a directory that maintains a one-to-one correspondence between the users of the enterprise and signature certificate. As stated above with respect to claim 5, Vaeth does not disclose a one-to-one correspondence between users of an enterprise and signature certificates. Accordingly, Vaeth does not disclose each and every element of claim 13. Therefore, Vaeth does not anticipate claim 13.

Claim 14 and 16 depend from claim 13 and should be patentable for substantially the same reasons as claim 13 and for the specific elements recited therein. Accordingly, allowance of claims 14 and 16 is respectfully requested.

Claim 16 recites a elements similar to elements recited in claim 8 and is not disclosed by the prior art for substantially the same reasons as claim 8.

For the reasons described above, claims 5, 6, 13, 14 and 16 should be patentable over the cited art. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. Rejection of Claims 1-2, 4, 9-10 and 12 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-2, 4, 9-10 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Vaeth (U.S. 6,308,277) in view of Asay (U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0062438). Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite maintaining a one-to-one correspondence between users of an enterprise and signature certificates. As admitted in the Office Action, Vaeth fails to disclose that upon a registration web server receiving information from a directory indicating that an identified user already possess a signature certificate, the registration web server informing a user that a new signature certificate will not be issued until the old signature certificate has been revoked, thereby preventing an unauthorized user from spoofing to obtain a valid signature certificate.

The addition of Asay does not cure the deficiencies of Vaeth. Neither Vaeth nor Asay taken individually or in combination teach or suggest maintaining a one-to-one correspondence between users of an enterprise and signature certificates, as recited in amended claim 1. Asay discloses a method of automatic replacement of a subscribers certificate (See Assay, Paras. [0065] and [0142]). However, Asay does not teach or suggest a one-to-one correspondence between users of an enterprise and signature certificates, as recited in claim 1. Asay does not teach or suggest that a subscriber cannot have multiple certificates at any one time. Thus, Asay also does not teach or suggest upon a registration server receiving information from a directory indicating that an identified user already possesses a signature certificate, the registration server informing the user that a new signature certificate will not be issued until the old signature certificate has been revoked, as recited in claim 1. Consequently in Asay, an unauthorized user

could spoof a subscriber, and receive another certificate, even though a certificate had already been issued for the spoofed subscriber. Thus, Vaeth and Asay do not render claim 1 obvious, and therefore allowance of claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Claim 2 and 4 depend from claim 1 and are patentable for substantially the same reasons as claim 1 and for the specific elements recited therein. Accordingly, allowance of claims 2 and 4 is respectfully requested.

Additionally, claim 4 recites providing a personal revocation authority to revoke a user's previous signature certificate, the personal revocation authority being chosen as to personally recognize the user. In contrast to the contention of the Office Action, Vaeth does not teach or suggest a personal revocation authority. The registration authority (RA) disclosed in Vaeth does not correspond to a personal revocation authority, as recited in claim 4. Vaeth does not teach or suggest that an RA can revoke a digital certificate. Further, the RA disclosed in Vaeth is a computer (See Vaeth, Col. 8, Lines 41-45), while the personal revocation authority recited in claim 4 is a person that personally recognizes the user. Vaeth discloses that a Certificate Authority (CA) generates revocation lists (See Vaeth Col. 10, Lines 60-65). In Vaeth, both the RA and the CA are computers, while the personal revocation authority recited in claim 4 is a person. Consequently, neither the RA nor the CA can personally recognize the user like the personal revocation authority recited in claim 4. The addition of Asay does not cure the deficiencies of Vaeth.. Asay discloses that a certificate revocation list 128 (CRL) is generated by a certificate authority (See Fig. 3 of Asay). Asay also discloses that the reliance server 104 notifies a certificate authority that a certificate needs to be revoked, so that the certificate authority can add the user to the CRL (See Asay, Para. [0444]). However, both the reliance server and the certificate authorities disclosed in Asay are computers, while the personal revocation authority recited in claim 4 is a person. Thus, neither the reliance server nor the certificate authority disclosed in Asay can personally recognize the user like the personal revocation authority recited in claim 4. Accordingly, neither Vaeth nor Asay taken individually or in combination render claim 4 obvious.

Amended claim 9 recites elements similar to elements recited claim 1 and is not obvious in view of the cited prior art for substantially the same reasons as claim 1. Accordingly, allowance of claim 9 is respectfully requested.

Claims 10 and 12 depend from claim 9 and should be patentable for substantially the same reasons as claims 1 and 9 and for the specific elements recited therein. Accordingly, allowance of claims 10 and 12 is respectfully requested.

Claim 12 recites a elements similar to elements recited in claim 4, and is not obvious for substantially the same reasons as claim 4.

For the reasons described above, claims 1-2, 4, 9-10 and 12 should be patentable over the cited art. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

V. Rejection of Claims 3, 7, 11 and 15 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 3, 7, 11 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Vaeth (U.S. 6,308,277) and Asay (U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0062438) and further in view of Zhou. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested for at least the following reasons.

Zhou discloses a metadirectory in a public key infrastructure (See Zhou, Page 1, Para. 2). Zhou does not teach or suggest maintaining a one-to-one correspondence between users of an enterprise and signature certificates, as recited in claims 1 and 9, from which claims 3 and 11 depend. Zhou does not cure the aforementioned deficiencies of Vaeth in view of Assay with respect to claims 1 and 9. Accordingly, allowance of claims 3 and 11 is respectfully requested.

In regards to claims 7 and 15, it is respectfully submitted that on page 7 lines 3 and 4, the Office Action mistakenly states that claims 5 and 13 were rejected as anticipated by Asay, when claims 5 and 13 was actually rejected as anticipated by Vaeth. Zhou discloses a metadirectory in a public key infrastructure (See Zhou, Page 1, Para. 2). Zhou does not teach or suggest maintaining a one-to-one correspondence between users of an enterprise and signature certificates, as recited in claims 5 and 13, from which claims 7 and 15 depend. Zhou does not

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cure the aforementioned deficiencies of Vaeth with respect to claims 5 and 13. Accordingly, allowance of claims 7 and 15 is respectfully requested.

For the reasons described above, claims 3, 7, 11 and 15 should be patentable over the cited art. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

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CONCLUSION

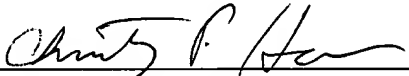
In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application and that the application be passed to issue.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,

Date

1/12/05



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